



Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission Annual Report May 2014

In its second year, the Commission has made great progress toward supporting Louisville Metro Government's goal of maintaining and growing a healthy tree canopy in our community. The following report summarizes these achievements and ongoing work.

Budget for Trees

The Commission successfully advocated to the Mayor and Metro Council for the following to be included in the FY2014 Metro Budget:

- The new position of Urban Forestry Coordinator responsible for developing and guiding the implementation of a communitywide tree management plan to increase the urban tree canopy;
- \$50,000 towards the cost of an Urban Tree Canopy Assessment; and
- \$250,000 for planting trees in the right-of-ways (street trees) and on city-owned property.

Tree Canopy Assessment

The Commission completed the follow activities to support the completion of a tree canopy assessment:

- Drafted and worked with Metro Purchasing to release an RFP for a tree canopy assessment. The contract is presently being awarded, and the total cost is \$115,700. In addition to \$50,000 from Metro, MSD has allocated \$50,000 to pay for the assessment. The Louisville Tree Fund and an anonymous private donor will provide the remaining \$15,700.
- Established the Louisville Tree Fund (the Fund) to receive private donations for tree related initiatives. Metro funds can only be used for planting trees in the rights-of-way (i.e., street trees) and on Metro government properties. The most urgent need for trees is in poorer neighborhoods. Currently housed at the Brightside Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, the Fund will provide the resources to pay for tree plantings when public dollars cannot be used and the means to pay for trees are limited.

Tree Plantings

In an effort to increase the number of trees in Louisville, the Projects Committee:

- Coordinated multiple neighborhood and downtown planting initiatives under the guidance of Mike Hayman, community volunteer for the Commission, who oversees special projects (see Attachment A).

- Refocused the Commission's Projects Committee, co-chaired by Urban Forestry Coordinator Erin Thompson and Commissioner Dr. Paul Cappiello, on coordinating the investment of public and private dollars in tree plantings communitywide and providing tree expertise to ensure the right tree is planted in the desired location. This Committee recently researched and drafted a list of recommended tree species for Louisville based on the specific needs of the individual site.
- Initiated a long-term conversation with the Public Works Director about the importance of street trees and the need to make accommodations such as expanding sidewalk tree holes beyond 4' by 4' to help ensure trees survive to maturity.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee has been very active over the past year. Specifically, the group has:

- Reviewed Chapter 10 of the Land Development Code (LDC) and submitted recommended revisions to the main LDC Improvement Committee convened by Louisville Metro Planning and Design Services. These revisions are currently under review.
- Recruited the Sierra Club to assume the responsibility of attending public hearings and speaking out on behalf of trees in cases where the tree canopy is threatened.
- Conducted considerable research on Tree Protection Ordinances in other cities and has begun a draft ordinance for Louisville. This process involves building the political and public will to have an ordinance that protects and enhances our tree canopy. This process could take up to two years.

Education and Community Outreach

Engaging the community in planting and caring for trees as well as educating the general public about the important role trees play in the future welfare of our community are areas needing much more attention and action in the coming year. Over the past year, the Commission has:

- Met monthly and heard presentations from Patrick Smith and Patrick Piuma, Urban Design Studio; Ken Herndon, Louisville Downtown Development Corporation; Steve Kempf, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, District 5; Ed Macie, Urban Forestry Coordinator, USDA Forest Service South Region; Aaron Boggs, University of Louisville; Pat Cecil, Louisville Nursery Association; Leslie Friesen, University of Louisville Hite Art Institute, and others.
- Worked with Brightside on shifting its mission toward tree planting for environmental impact as opposed to just beautification. Commission members and the Executive Director and Board Chair of Brightside traveled to meet with the Director and staff of Keep Indianapolis Beautiful to learn how they made the transition to a free standing non-profit organization primarily focused on trees.
- Engaged Leslie Friesen's University of Louisville Graphic Design class to develop a tree education and community awareness campaign as a class project, which included creative ideas for financial solicitation. Their concept and promotional materials were very well received by the Commission and could be used to get a campaign started now.

Commission Goals for 2014-15

The Commission has set the following communitywide goals. These goals are intended to increase Louisville's tree canopy and are not limited to the work of the Commission. The goals are as follows:

- Disseminate the findings from the Tree Canopy Assessment communitywide.
- Launch a tree awareness and education campaign in fall 2014 that is followed by a campaign for funding the planting and maintenance of new trees after the release of the Tree Canopy Assessment.
- Obtain a commitment from the Kentucky State Highway Department, the Jefferson County Public School District and the Housing Authority of Louisville to plant and maintain more trees on their respective properties¹.
- Complete at least two demonstration tree projects to serve as models for best practices in tree planting and placement.
- Complete a draft of a Tree Protection Ordinance, including a process document for seeking input and support from the executive and legislative branches of Louisville Metro Government and the broader community.
- Improve coordination and role clarification of all the various entities involved with trees in Louisville: the Commission, Brightside, the Tree Action Team, Louisville Grows, Metro Parks, Public Works and others in the community.
- Establish a goal and timeline for the number of trees planted and for increasing the percent of tree canopy coverage in Louisville.

¹ Greater involvement, in particular, is desired from the Kentucky State Highway Department to maintain trees along state roads in Louisville and to reduce grass mowing in areas where public safety is not a factor. No-mow areas allow for trees to grow from natural regeneration.

ATTACHMENT A
TREE COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP PLANTINGS FALL 2013-SPRING 2014

Location	Funding Source	Number of Trees Planting
URBAN GOVERNMENT CENTER	Metro capital funds	33
HANCOCK, CLAY ISLANDS	Metro capital funds, Urban Forester	38
PARK DUVALLE	Metro capital funds, Urban Forester and Public Works Arborist	128
METRO UNITED WAY	Anonymous donor	14
JEFFERSON COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE	Anonymous donor	11
SPALDING UNIVERSITY	Anonymous donor, Ecotech	10
BYCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Anonymous donor, Ecotech	17
PARKLAND, REYNOLDS	Metro capital funds, Ecotech	13
PARKLAND, CARNEGIE LIBRARY	Memorial tree from friends of Mike Kremer	1
PARKLAND, RESIDENTS ACROSS FROM REYNOLDS	Whitehall House and Gardens	2
PARKLAND, BRANDEIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Anonymous donor, Ecotech	18
KOSAIR CHARITIES	Jim King, Ecotech	6
PORTLAND AVENUE AND 32 ND STREET	Metro capital funds	10
PORTLAND AVENUE AND 32 ND STREET	Ecotech	2
PORTLAND AVENUE AND 32 ND STREET	Ecotech, Love Louisville Trees	6
GERMAN-PARISTOWN	Love Louisville Trees, Ecotech	4
GIRL SCOUT SHIVELY AND LEEDS PARKS	Cayley and Colleen Crum, Shively public works, Ecotech, Urban Forester, Metro Capital Funds and others	61
KENTUCKY CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE	Brightside, Brown-Forman	20
KENTUCKY CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE	Ecotech	9
KENTUCKY CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE	Whitehall House and Gardens	3

AVONDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION		6
BUTCHERTOWN	Metro capital funds, Metro Parks Landscape Division, Metro Parks Foundation, White Clay, Plumbers Supply, Butchertown Neighborhood Association, Anonymous donor, Lincoln Elementary School, JBS Meat Packing.	50
BROADFIELDS	Ecotech, Tina Ward-Pugh, Whitehall House and Gardens	10
BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY	Anonymous donor	10
CITY HALL PARKING LOT	Louisville Nursery Association, Public works arborist, LDP, PARC	28
SENECA GOLF BLACK GUM TRIAL	Seneca Golf, Metro Parks Landscape Architect, Olmsted Conservancy	30
TYLER LANE TRAFFIC ISLANDS	Public Works Arborist, Tom Owen	12
METRO PARKS GERMAN-PARISTOWN, FLAGET, LAKE DREAMLAND	Ecotech, Metro Parks Landscape Division	30
AFTERGLOW AND OUTER LOOP	Ecotech	10

Submitted by:
Michael Hayman
Project Manager
May 16, 2014